

The War is Over: The Crisis of Angola’s Internally Displaced Continues

A Human Rights Watch Background Briefing Paper

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Summary

The ceasefire signed on April 4, 2002, between the Angolan government army, (FAA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), following the death of rebel leader Jonas Savimbi in February 2002, may be the best chance for a durable peace in Angola since the civil war began in the mid-1970s. UNITA has also agreed to the implementation of the 1994 Lusaka peace agreement, suspended in 1998. Yet, as efforts to implement the peace get underway, including the demobilisation of tens of thousands of UNITA combatants, a sharp new rise in the number of Angolans requiring immediate assistance as a consequence of the war has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis and raised the spectre of new human rights abuses. A renewed commitment from the international community—as well as the Angolan government—is urgently needed to ensure the protection of Angola's internally displaced.

Following thirty years of conflict, as many as one-third of Angola's thirteen million people are internally displaced; another 435,000 Angolans fled the country altogether and became refugees abroad. Although the ceasefire has ended the forced displacement that accompanied the war, the need for attention to the displaced has become, if anything, more urgent. Some 500,000 civilians who were isolated from all assistance behind UNITA lines or kept in areas controlled by government armed forces during the last four years have become accessible to humanitarian agencies for the first time, placing new pressure on existing provisions for displaced people. A further 256,900 people from families affiliated to UNITA fighters also need assistance.

During the first two months of 2002, about 98,000 displaced persons were newly registered by United Nations (U.N.) and nongovernmental humanitarian agencies in Angola. Since February, new arrivals have averaged some 30,000 people a month. These people are no longer fleeing the war, but are trying to escape starvation and find assistance where it is provided. At least half of these people require immediate medical care and food provision. Of the 1.4 million displaced people that were already receiving humanitarian assistance, more than 400,000 are living in more than one hundred camps and transit centers. Many of these facilities have very poor conditions. The displaced also continue to face serious security threats, including harassment by government forces, restrictions on free movement, and possible forced return to areas where they would be at risk of political persecution and human rights abuses.

The government and U.N. agencies are currently developing plans to resettle the internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their areas of origin. The operation, due to start in July, is expected to move 500,000 people by the end of this year. Human Rights Watch is deeply concerned, however, that human rights considerations are being marginalized within these plans, and that neither the government nor any U.N. agency is taking responsibility for implementing an effective protection system for the displaced as the resettlement plans go forward—including ensuring that nobody is forced to move against their will. Given the past protection problems faced by IDPs in Angola, among them those housed in government-approved camps, this is a serious omission.

Plans do exist on paper to ensure that the protection needs of the displaced are met. Over the last two years, following a series of high-level international visits to Angola that brought

greater attention to the needs of the displaced, the U.N. has worked closely with the Angolan government to put in place policies and structures that should respond to protection issues, in particular. Most significantly, the government has adopted a new law, the Norms for the Resettlement of Displaced Populations, that sets out clear guidelines for resettlement and assistance, based on the U.N.'s own Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. A whole range of groups and sub-groups bringing together relevant U.N. and government agencies has also been formed, with responsibilities for different aspects of assistance to displaced persons. A U.N. inter-agency protection strategy for IDPs was developed in 2000 and 2001, and is currently under revision once again. But effective implementation of these plans has been lacking. There is confusion and dispute within the U.N. itself as to the roles of the different U.N. agencies, government structures, and other partners, including nongovernmental organizations. The government has failed to fulfill its own responsibilities. Making matters worse is the fact that, as of June 2002, only 24 percent of a U.N. appeal for U.S. \$233 million to address the humanitarian crisis in Angola in 2002 had been met. An additional U.N. bridging request of U.S. \$141 million has been hunched to the international donor community, which includes specific provision for protection mainly for UNITA underage soldiers and family members. Together with the mine-action program, however, the funds requested for protection represent only 4.6 percent of the total being sought.

Within the U.N., the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has been responsible since mid-2001 for coordinating U.N. initiatives in relation to the protection of the internally displaced. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), though it has only a limited mandate in relation to IDPs and a very small presence in Angola, has also played an important role in focusing attention on protection issues. However, following the failure of major donors to renew funding, UNHCR's program for IDPs in Angola is currently scheduled to close in 2002. OCHA is also reviewing its work with the internally displaced; Human Rights Watch has learned that there is even a possibility that it too may withdraw from protection work. Even as it is, the latest draft of the U.N. inter-agency "protection strategy for IDPs and returnees" only provides for human rights issues to be taken up with the government authorities in the case of harassment of humanitarian personnel and looting of humanitarian assets. In case of forced resettlement or harassment of returnees and others, the strategy focuses on monitoring and sensitisation, the promotion of community-based protection initiatives, and the development of referral systems for victims rather than direct intervention with government authorities regarding the protection of IDPs. This is seriously inadequate and should be changed.

Human Rights Watch has been critical of OCHA's protection role with IDPs in Angola. The agency is overstretched with other responsibilities and lacks experience in protection work. [See briefing to Security Council: www.hrw.org/background/africa/angola/2002/angola060302.pdf] We also believe that as the international agency mandated to protect refugees, UNHCR has greater expertise and experience in providing protection to forcibly displaced people. As such, UNHCR would appear in principle to be the most appropriate agency to lead protection work among the internally displaced in Angola.

However, at this stage the most urgent need is for the plans for the protection of the displaced that have been adopted in recent years to be implemented, and for clear lines of responsibility to be established for that work. In light of this, any suggestion that OCHA's

protection work in Angola be discontinued gives cause for dismay. As OCHA already has a presence on the ground that would enable it to take up relatively quickly the new challenges of protection created by the changed circumstances in Angola since the death of Savimbi, it should retain that role. But UNHCR's involvement is also critical. In particular, UNHCR should be enabled to put in a place a mobile team of roving protection officers, with responsibility for protection monitoring, training and capacity building, technical advice, follow up and supervision and assisting internally displaced people with documentation. The planned return of refugees and IDPs following the ceasefire could provide an opportunity for the expansion of UNHCR's protection role in Angola. International donors to Angola should provide the funding necessary to sustain these efforts.

The current mandate of the U.N. Office in Angola (UNOA), established by the Security Council in 1999, expires in July 2002. The terms of its renewal are currently being renegotiated by the U.N.'s Department of Political Affairs with the Angolan government, taking into account the changed circumstances brought about by the ceasefire. UNOA's Human Rights Division, in particular, should be more active in bringing attention to human rights abuses against the internally displaced. At present, however, the draft new mandate for UNOA does not include any provisions that cover protection for internally displaced persons. This omission should be rectified.

This background briefing paper looks at the causes of displacement before the signing of the ceasefire. (For testimonies of abuses obtained by Human Rights Watch, see web annex, <http://www.hrw.org/angola/idp2002>), protection issues for the displaced, and the current situation of the internally displaced in Angola, in the light of the forthcoming resettlement and return processes. It reviews the international and domestic initiatives underway to provide protection for the displaced people, and makes recommendations on how these efforts can be improved.

Historical Causes of Displacement in Angola

UNITA was notorious for its brutality against civilians during the civil war. In UNITA-controlled areas, local inhabitants were regularly subjected to physical assaults, mutilations, forced conscription, looting, and extrajudicial killings. UNITA's strict military discipline and chain of command broke down after severe military setbacks in 1999. A fragmented UNITA increasingly resorted to hit-and-run attacks and also to violence and reprisals against civilians. (see also, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/angola/> and <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k2/africa1.html>)

UNITA's terror tactics caused massive displacement. Villagers fled their homes and often spent days hiding in the surrounding *mata* (bush), living off wild fruit or roots, always on the move in an attempt to reach government-controlled areas where some assistance was available. At times, UNITA also displaced entire villages, forbidding people to leave with their belongings and forcing them to survive in new locations, without clothes, food, or medicines. Fleeing civilians sometimes traveled for weeks and over hundreds of kilometers before they reached relative safety. Some died along the way, or only narrowly survived lack of food, landmine injuries, or disease.

Civilians who could not escape UNITA-controlled areas were often made to supply the rebels with food, forcibly conscripted, or abducted by UNITA as forced laborers to carry arms, cut firewood, or loot. Women and girls were used as sexual slaves and abused by UNITA fighters. They were also forced to wash their uniforms, prepare the campsites, and cook their food.

Angolan government forces—the army, the Forças Armadas Angolanas (FAA), and the police, the Polícia Nacional de Angola (PNA)—also contributed to the massive displacement of civilians. When government forces secured a UNITA-held area, they often treated the local villagers harshly and inhumanely, viewing them as rebel supporters or collaborators. In such operations the FAA usually rounded up all the villagers in and around the area they had captured. The army called this operation *limpeza* (cleansing). The aim was twofold: to root out possible UNITA supporters, and to recruit able-bodied men for civilian militia groups to assist in fighting UNITA. During such operations, harassment, indiscriminate beatings, and sexual abuse were routine. Looting by FAA troops was widespread and this still remains a problem today; many of these soldiers lack proper supplies and are poorly trained. FAA troops have also forced local villagers to serve as porters and to carry looted goods to the nearest town. Once the army had cleared the secured areas of local residents, people were sent to the nearest municipality and forbidden to leave the towns. Landmines and general insecurity prevented many of those who might have wished to leave from doing so. (On landmines see, <http://www.icbl.org/lm/2001/angola/>)

After a few weeks of such military operations, overcrowding in municipalities became untenable and the health and welfare of the displaced deteriorated rapidly. In some cases, soldiers, themselves poorly supplied, rounded up the displaced to assist them in the search for food. During these foraging expeditions, skirmishes with rebels could and did occur, and civilians became trapped in the fighting. Other displaced people, forced by the miserable conditions and hunger, attempted to make their own way back to their fields at night in search of food or firewood, taking the risk of falling victim to a landmine or being captured, beaten, or even killed by UNITA or government forces.

When a municipality could no longer contain the growing numbers of people, the displaced were moved to camps in provincial capitals or in their surrounding areas by military trucks and sometimes helicopters. In some cases, local authorities moved the internally displaced to designated resettlement sites without sufficient consultation with those affected or adequate preparation. Some provincial administrations resettled the displaced wherever agricultural land was available, even when such land was close to fighting or adjacent to active minefields. Some displaced were further forcibly moved to other more distant provincial capitals or Luanda, the national capital. Formerly self-sufficient subsistence farmers soon become wholly dependent on nominal international humanitarian assistance or on such help as impoverished relatives or friends could offer.

Impunity for abuses against IDPs

Over many years, the Angolan government failed dismally to protect the rights of the displaced, although it made some efforts to provide humanitarian assistance—even these though suffered from poor implementation and minimal concern for the well-being of the displaced.

Many of the displaced lack identity documentation, facilitating harassment by the authorities, especially the national police. Arbitrary beatings and arrests occur when the displaced are unable to present personal identification documents to the police and are unable to bribe their way out. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to assaults, including sexual violence, by policemen and soldiers located in road control posts when on their way to and from isolated agricultural areas or when collecting water. Additionally, without documentation, the displaced, and especially children, are unable to access social services. The *sobas* (traditional authorities) routinely demand bribes to include people on lists to receive assistance. Local landowners regularly exploit the internally displaced as a source of cheap labor for cultivation; those that manage to find work as agricultural laborers are regularly subject to extortion at military and police checkpoints when they return from the fields. Soldiers that guard access to the camps also “tax” the residents and steal food and non-food relief items.

Little or no effort has been made by the government to investigate the frequent allegations of human rights abuse against the displaced or hold officials in the army and police responsible. Among the problems in ensuring accountability for abuses is the fact that, under a 1994 law, the military authorities have discretion in deciding whether soldiers suspected of committing crimes against the civilian population will be tried before the military or civilian courts. In practice, military personnel alleged to be responsible for violations against civilians are rarely investigated and even fewer are referred to civilian criminal courts. Even if a case is referred to a civilian court, little or no sanction is likely, because civilian courts are virtually nonexistent. According to a U.N. survey carried out in March 2001, only thirteen out of 164 municipalities then had functioning municipal courts.

Several high-level visits to Angola, including those of Francis Deng, the U.N. Secretary-General’s representative on internally displaced persons, in November 2000 and Dennis McNamara, the U.N.’s special coordinator on internal displacement, in March 2001, focused on the need for improved humanitarian aid, stronger protection, and better coordination of programs for the internally displaced. McNamara’s visit concluded that: “protection of the internally displaced continues to pose a major challenge” and that “many protection needs of the displaced go largely unaddressed.” Following his visit, Deng reported that the Angolan Ministry of Justice was formulating a policy to ensure accountability of military and police personnel; according to UNOA’s Human Rights Division, no such policy has yet been enacted.

Government Protection Efforts: Plans, Committees but Too Little Action

National Level

In January 2001, the Angolan government took a significant step in recognizing its responsibilities toward the displaced: the passage into law of the *Normas sobre o reassentamento das populações deslocadas* (Norms for the Resettlement of Displaced Populations).

The law sets out minimum operational standards for resettlement of the internally displaced and is intended to ensure that the relocation process fully respects the rights and safety of the displaced. It is the first time that a government has used the U.N. Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as a basis for its domestic law (For the full text, see http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/idp_gp/idp.html). The Norms include the provisions contained in the U.N. Guiding Principles that relate to return, resettlement, and reintegration (section V). They set out the rights of the displaced, and also underline the voluntary nature of the resettlement process, and the involvement of the displaced in the planning and management of relocation.

In February 2001, a technical working group was formed under the leadership of the Ministry of Assistance and Social Reintegration (Ministério da Assistência e Reinserção Social, MINARS) to draft administrative regulations (*regulamento*) for the standardized application of the law countrywide, and to identify benchmarks for monitoring the resettlement process. The draft regulations, produced during 2001, contain fourteen articles identifying the responsible government bodies for the implementation of the Norms and their competence to address issues of land identification and security, voluntary choice of resettlement, infrastructure, social assistance, food and non-food assistance, and water and sanitation. However, the Council of Ministers never formerly approved the regulations, and they are now being re-drafted.

These legislative measures would be particularly commendable if they did not suffer from a key shortcoming—lack of implementation.

MINARS is the primary government agency responsible for coordinating assistance to the internally displaced. Through its efforts, and in cooperation with the U.N., a number of structures and plans have been put into place. An “inter-ministerial commission on the humanitarian situation” was established in July 1999 and accepted responsibility for providing protection for displaced people. Protection issues were also highlighted in a National Emergency Plan of Action prepared by MINARS in May 2001.

Nevertheless, the 2002 U.N. Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal to donors for assistance to Angola noted that only 50 percent of resettlement initiatives had been “implemented in compliance with the Norms for the Resettlement of Displaced Populations.” Only 105,000 displaced persons out of the planned number of 500,000 were resettled in 2001.

The Provincial and Municipal Levels

The provincial and municipal authorities are critical to ensuring that the displaced receive protection. According to the draft regulations for the implementation of the Norms for the Resettlement of Displaced Populations, the eighteen provincial administrations are responsible for implementation of the law, and for the provision of basic services—including health, sanitation, water, and education—to the relocation sites, as well as agricultural implements and seeds to help those resettled regain self-sufficiency. Pre-existing but dormant government

structures known as “Provincial Humanitarian Coordination Group” and “Sub-groups for Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees” are to play the leading role in supervising protection of the internally displaced. In reality, these structures do not operate effectively: even the Luanda Sub-Group in the capital is understaffed and has few resources.

In mid-2000, an initiative of UNHCR resulted in the development of provincial protection plans intended to build government capacity to respond to human rights violations suffered by the displaced. A national workshop was coordinated by a small national training team, composed of representatives from the government, OCHA, UNHCR, and a nongovernmental organization, and attended by representatives of the various government agencies dealing with the internally displaced.

Representatives from these agencies then travelled to the provinces and conducted further “protection training workshops” at which “provincial plans of action” for the protection of the internally displaced were drafted. These plans were then presented to provincial governments for approval in ten of the eighteen Angolan provinces. Workshops to draft plans for the remaining provinces started in January 2002, and most provinces had been covered by June 2002. The aim of the protection plans is to establish a framework for coordinated action by state and non-state actors, including through the establishment in the future of provincial working groups on protection (made up of those who participated in the training workshops). Six out of the ten drafts have been officially approved and three provincial working groups on protection were established and are meeting regularly.

The development of these national and provincial policies and structures is a positive step. However, the central government’s failure to pass the regulations for the implementation of the Norms for the Resettlement of Displaced Populations has communicated a lack of political commitment to the provincial government structures supposedly responsible for the internally displaced. The provincial governors who should move these programs forward are directly appointed by the president, represent the central government in the provinces, and are often the primary representative of the ruling party at the provincial level. Their desire to maintain good relations with the central government has often seemed to override efforts to respond to the needs of the local population and IDPs. At the same time, the central government does not tend to interfere with what it regards as provincial government responsibilities. Finally, these initiatives are the conception of a technical group made up largely of U.N. personnel, and have often been conceived or enacted without active participation from the relevant administrative departments in the provinces, which do not therefore have a vested interest in their success.

U.N. Protection Efforts: No Clear Ownership

While there are several U.N. agencies working with the internally displaced in Angola, there is no single U.N. agency with clear formal responsibility for protection of internally displaced persons—contributing to the neglect they have suffered.

The U.N. program of support for internally displaced persons, under the overall coordination of OCHA, is a hodgepodge of several overlapping initiatives that, accompanied by jockeying between the various agencies contributes to a lack of sufficient oversight or quality control. The

various programs, plans, working groups, and subgroups have led to confusion within the U.N. itself as to the roles of the different U.N. agencies, government structures, and other partners, including nongovernmental organizations. Clarity is urgently needed. (See the attached explanatory diagram for how these different structures are meant to relate to each other).

Since March 2000, OCHA has been designated coordinator for humanitarian assistance programs in Angola. OCHA works under the humanitarian and resident coordinator of the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP), who serves as the head of all U.N. missions in Angola. Since mid-2001, OCHA has also informally led its U.N. sister agencies on issues related to the protection of the internally displaced. OCHA has deployed eleven field staff to the eighteen provinces, some of them covering more than one province, to help monitor conditions for the displaced. However, in interviews with staff in December 2001, OCHA informed Human Rights Watch that it neither had the mandate nor the ability to take up individual protection cases with the Angolan authorities. Such actions could, according to OCHA, jeopardize its role of assisting humanitarian assistance operations. OCHA at that time clarified that it would intervene only under three circumstances: (1) if the Norms for the Resettlement of Displaced Populations were not being properly respected; (2) in the event of diversion of humanitarian assistance; and (3) in the event of attacks or abuses against both international and local humanitarian personnel.

One of OCHA's achievements has been the creation of an inter-agency protection strategy developed in 2000 and 2001, and then revised in November 2001. Through this process, a Human Rights Working Group has been established, chaired by the UNDP humanitarian and resident coordinator. Within the Human Rights Working Group, there is a sub-group called the Sub-Group on IDP Protection, chaired jointly by UNHCR and OCHA. In this role, OCHA and UNHCR will now have joint responsibility for advocacy with the government authorities—a major improvement on the previous protection strategy, which did not designate a specific agency with responsibility for consistent advocacy with the government. A Sub-Group on Community Mobilization and Capacity Building, chaired by the UNOA Human Rights Division, is also supposed to be set up under the Human Rights Working Group, but is not yet operational.

UNHCR has also worked with IDPs in Angola since mid-2000, concentrating operations in the two northern provinces of Uíje and Zaire, and the town of Viana. As the only international U.N. agency mandated with responsibility for protecting and assisting refugees, UNHCR has the greatest experience in providing protection to forcibly displaced communities, though it only intervenes in situations of internal displacement in limited and circumscribed circumstances.

When Human Rights Watch visited Angola in May 2001 it found that UNHCR did not have sufficient capacity to provide protection effectively—even in the provinces in which it had projects. The program in general suffered from high staff turnover and thus a lack of consistency. Nevertheless, UNHCR has been able to play a key role in strengthening the government's and U.N.'s protection strategies. It participated in the drafting of the Norms for the Resettlement of Displaced Populations and played a leading role in creating the national training team that led to the drafting of the provincial plans of action for the protection of the internally displaced (described above). UNHCR also provided specific protection training to government officials, other U.N. agencies, and other partners.

A UNHCR assessment team that visited Angola in November 2001 concluded that over the previous year and a half UNHCR's program had made a significant impact on the ground. Some of the most vulnerable IDPs in the three provinces in which UNHCR was operating had been provided with material assistance. Moreover, there was a much greater national awareness of the importance of protection as a result of UNHCR training and capacity building.

The UNHCR assessment team recommended that UNHCR should extend its program in Angola through to the end of 2003 and should recruit two more, relatively senior, international protection officers. The assessment team also supported a newly drafted "Strategy for Operationalizing Protection for Internally Displaced Persons in Angola" put forward by the UNHCR branch office in Luanda. This includes proposals to expand UNHCR protection activities to additional provinces—particularly those where there is a potential for refugee return, such as Moxico and Kuando Kubando—through a mobile, or roving, protection team. UNHCR would focus on three issues: (a) capacity building and technical training for U.N., government, and NGO staff, and for IDP communities, including awareness raising amongst IDPs on their rights; (b) protection monitoring in the provinces; and (c) provision of registration and identity documents for IDPs. The last point was considered particularly important as without proper identity documents IDPs are vulnerable to harassment, arbitrary arrest, and detention by the security forces on suspicion of being UNITA supporters. Both the U.N. humanitarian and resident coordinator and the U.N. Secretary-General's representative on internally displaced persons have strongly urged UNHCR to remain and expand its activities.

However, in December 2001, around the same time as these recommendations were released, the U.S.—the major donor to the IDP project—decided not to renew an eighteen month funding for UNHCR's IDP program in Angola. Japan followed suit. Without the necessary funding support, UNHCR will be forced to cease its program for IDPs in Angola in 2002. The program is currently continuing at a depleted level with carry-over funds from 2001. UNHCR is entering a phase-out stage and some staff have already departed in anticipation of the closure of the program.

The Human Rights Division of the U.N. Office in Angola, established in 1999, has implemented projects to promote awareness of human rights. These have rarely included IDP participants. The U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) is active in protection programs for children generally in Angola, and some of the beneficiaries—for example, of efforts to ensure family reunification—are displaced children.

A Protection Technical Team, consisting of UNICEF, the UNOA Human Rights Division, OCHA, and UNHCR, reports to the UNDP humanitarian and resident coordinator and reviews monthly reports from designated provincial "focal points"—currently OCHA field advisers. The provincial focal points collect information on violations of humanitarian law and other protection issues from the displaced, church groups, nongovernmental organizations, and other relevant sources. There may have been some efforts at "quiet diplomacy" with the authorities on the basis of these reports. However, humanitarian agencies working in Angola have stated to Human Rights Watch that this system has not been able to prevent, for example, cases of forced and disorganised return or settlement of populations to or in areas that are not secure.

The Current Situation

Since the April 2002 ceasefire, the government has begun the process of demobilization and disarmament of tens of thousands of UNITA soldiers, and the reintegration back into normal society of about 256,900 people from families affiliated with UNITA fighters. A further 5,000 ex-combatants are expected to be integrated into the national army and police. By mid-June 2002, the government stated that it had demobilized about 79,000 soldiers, a number exceeding its expectations. While these numbers imply success, the demobilization process has not been without problems: U.N. agencies and humanitarian organizations, already working at their full capacity, are still struggling to extend assistance to the quartering and family areas. While the soldiers have been receiving some assistance since the beginning of the cantonment process, civilians and families who accompany them are reported to be in appalling condition. They lack adequate food and medicine and malnutrition and mortality rates amongst them are reported to be high.

In addition, some 500,000 civilians who have been isolated from all assistance behind UNITA lines since the breakdown of the Lusaka peace process in 1998, or kept in areas controlled by government forces, have become accessible to humanitarian agencies for the first time, placing new pressures on existing provisions for displaced people. During the first two months of 2002, about 98,000 displaced persons were newly registered by U.N. and nongovernmental humanitarian agencies in Angola. Since February, new arrivals have averaged some 30,000 people a month. Since the ceasefire, these people are no longer fleeing fighting, but are trying to escape starvation and find assistance where it is provided. At least half of these people require immediate medical care and food provision. Although small numbers of Angolans are spontaneously returning to their homes, larger numbers of internally displaced persons are still arriving at the major provincial capitals seeking assistance. Of the 1.4 million displaced people that were already receiving humanitarian assistance, more than 400,000 are living in more than one hundred camps and transit centers. At least twenty of these facilities are reported to have extremely poor conditions.

The government and U.N. are currently developing plans to resettle the internally displaced persons. In March 2002, the government unveiled a plan to “create conditions of security for the return of the displaced populations to their areas of origin” and to implement an “emergency program for supporting the social reintegration and resettlement of the four million displaced.” The operation, due to start in July, is expected to move 500,000 people by the end of this year.

In addition, since the April 2002 ceasefire, the Sub-Group on IDP Protection chaired by UNHCR and OCHA has initiated a further revision of the inter-agency protection strategy. The proposed revised strategy identifies the human rights violations that may occur following the ceasefire and in the course of both the return programs for IDPs and returnees and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the former UNITA combatants. These include forced resettlement, harassment of IDPs or humanitarian personnel by government security forces, abuse of UNITA members and their families or of populations in former UNITA areas, restrictions on freedom of movement, and other abuses. The strategy also identifies the planned remedial actions for these abuses—but only in the case of harassment of humanitarian personnel or looting of humanitarian assets is it anticipated that the problem will be taken up with the

government authorities, with a possibility of halting aid if violations are gross or persist. In the case of forced resettlement or harassment of returnees and others, the strategy is based on monitoring and sensitisation, the promotion of community-based protection initiatives, and the development of referral systems for victims, rather than direct intervention with government authorities to prevent abuses against IDPs.

OCHA is also reviewing its activities for the internally displaced in Angola. Human Rights Watch has heard from sources within OCHA that the head office in New York is considering ending its protection work in Angola altogether, although the Angola office wishes to continue to work in this field.

The U.N.'s Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Angola for 2002 requested international donors to provide U.S. \$233 million to address the humanitarian crisis, including the resettlement and protection of displaced people. As of June 2002, the appeal had brought in only 24 percent of that amount. An additional U.N. bridging request of U.S. \$141 million was addressed to the international donor community in June 2002; this includes specific provision for the protection mostly of UNITA underage soldiers and family members. Together with the mine-action program, however, the funds for protection represent only 4.6 percent of the total amount requested. Donors have in the past criticized the Angolan government's failure to allocate sufficient resources to its agencies that help the internally displaced, particularly because Angola, as the second largest oil exporter in sub-Saharan Africa, is believed to have adequate resources to fund humanitarian programs (see also, <http://www.hrw.org/background/Africa/Angola/index.htm>). However, the current crisis in Angola demands immediate international attention, and international donors are leaving many displaced people vulnerable by failing to fund the U.N. appeals in full.

Conclusion

In principle, Human Rights Watch considers that UNHCR is the most appropriate U.N. agency to assume overall operational responsibility for the protection of IDPs in Angola, based on its practical protection experience and expertise with forcibly displaced communities. Human Rights Watch believes, therefore, that UNHCR protection officers equipped to address individual protection problems and raise grievances with the government, as they do in other refugee and displacement situations, should be deployed throughout the provinces.

Human Rights Watch is also concerned that OCHA field officers face too many other competing demands and lack the training and expertise to respond effectively to the protection needs of IDPs. OCHA field officers are already responsible for the coordination of humanitarian aid deliveries and the security of humanitarian workers, and are currently overseeing a needs assessment of areas that have remained inaccessible for years. Although OCHA officers have had protection training from UNHCR, the agency does not have UNHCR's expertise in providing protection.

Nevertheless, as OCHA is currently the only U.N. agency on the ground in Angola with the capacity to provide oversight and carry out protection work, Human Rights Watch views with extreme concern any possibility that OCHA may withdraw from its protection activities for IDPs

in Angola. This possibility is even more worrying because UNHCR has been forced to phase-out its involvement with IDPs in Angola, following the termination of United States and Japanese support for the program.

At this stage, the most pressing need is for implementation in practice and strengthening of the plans for the protection of the displaced that have been adopted in recent years, and for clear lines of responsibility to be established to make such implementation effective. As OCHA currently has a presence on the ground that would enable it to take up relatively quickly the new challenges of protection created by the changed circumstances in Angola since the death of Savimbi, then it is reasonable that it should retain that role. However, in the absence of UNHCR protection officers in all the provinces, OCHA should also assume responsibility for taking up individual protection cases and raising grievances with the government authorities. Greater emphasis should also be given to strengthening the provincial level protection groups, including the government Sub-Group on Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees, and including more civil society actors in these groups.

UNHCR should also seek funding from its donors to enable the organization to implement the December 2001 “Strategy for Operationalising Protection for IDPs in Angola” and to extend its presence in Angola at least until the end of 2003. In particular, UNHCR should be enabled to put in place a mobile team of roving protection officers, with responsibility for protection monitoring, training and capacity building, technical advice, and assisting internally displaced people with documentation.

Recommendations

To the Angolan Government

- Ensure that protection of the human rights of the internally displaced is given priority attention, including through the following measures:
 - (1) Pass the draft administrative regulations (*Regulamento*) that will ensure national implementation of the Norms for the Resettlement of Displaced Populations and prepare clear procedures for monitoring respect of the Norms and activating practical mechanisms in the event of non-compliance.
 - (2) Commit greater financial, human, and training resources at the provincial and municipal levels and build capacity for consistent and effective implementation of the Norms for the Resettlement of Displaced Populations and the government’s protection plans at the provincial and local level;
 - (3) Closely monitor the progress of the implementation of the Norms and protection plans at the provincial level, and demand accountability from the local authorities in the accomplishment of their protection responsibilities; and
 - (4) Investigate and take appropriate disciplinary action or institute criminal proceedings against military, police, or militia personnel where there are credible allegations that they

have been responsible for abuses. Commit greater resources to the Ministry of Justice for provincial prosecutors and their investigative staff to routinely visit displaced camps to interview victims, investigate violations, and instigate criminal proceedings against perpetrators of such abuses.

To the United Nations

Security Council

- Include strong measures for protection of the internally displaced within the renegotiated mandate for the Office of the U.N. in Angola (UNOA). In particular, military and non-military observers should be mandated to monitor and report human rights abuses outside the areas for quartering demobilized UNITA soldiers, particularly within displaced camps and during resettlement. Reports of abuses should be taken up with the government.

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

- Appoint additional protection field officers in each province to work collaboratively with government staff to take up individual protection cases and monitor human rights violations. These officers should be authorized to raise grievances directly with the government authorities and should liaise at the provincial level with the relevant authorities in the Angolan government.
- With UNHCR supervise the implementation of the Provincial Protection Plans by the government and assist the functioning of the government-led Sub-Group on Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees.
- Assist UNOA's Human Rights Division in the establishment of informal groups of civil society actors to analyse protection issues and ways to redress the abuses suffered by the internally displaced.

Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

- Lobby international donors for funding to enable the organization to implement the December 2001 "Strategy for Operationalising Protection for IDPs in Angola" and to extend its presence in Angola at least until the end of 2003. In particular, UNHCR should be enabled to put in place a mobile team of roving protection officers, with responsibility for protection monitoring, training and capacity building, technical advice, and assisting internally displaced people with documentation. The planned return of refugees and IDPs following the ceasefire could provide an opportunity for the expansion of UNHCR's protection role in Angola.
- Proceed with the proposal to post two additional relatively senior level protection officers in Angola on fixed term contracts.

- Fully implement its responsibilities as co-chair of the Sub-Group on IDP Protection, with a particular focus on training, capacity building, and technical advice for other U.N. agencies, government, and nongovernmental staff, as well as members of the IDP communities and civil society actors. In this role UNHCR should also monitor protection activities in the field.
- Urge the Angolan government to issue identity documents to the internally displaced, and provide technical and other assistance to enable the government to do so. Ensure that documentation for IDPs is accepted by government and other agencies and enables IDPs to access health, education, and other social services.

Office of the United Nations in Angola

- The Human Rights Division should use its role as chair of the Sub-Group on Community Mobilization and Capacity Building (under the Human Rights Working Group) to facilitate—in collaboration with OCHA—the creation of informal groups of civil society actors to analyse protection issues and ways to redress the abuses suffered by the internally displaced. These groups should include church and civil society organizations, local and international humanitarian agencies, and representatives from both displaced and resident communities. The groups should be tasked with regularly visiting camps for the displaced, and monitoring and reporting to UNHCR, OCHA and UNOA’s Human Rights Division on patterns of human rights abuses, as well as facilitating communication between the internally displaced and the Angolan authorities.
- The Human Rights Division should also support the Sub-Group on IDP Protection, and provide advice on advocacy to the UNDP humanitarian and resident coordinator.

To Donor Governments

- Renew and increase funding for UNHCR’s protection activities with IDPs in Angola and guarantee financial support for all U.N., government, and NGO programs for the internally displaced.
- Guarantee financial support for the projects outlined in the June 2002 U.N. bridging request for humanitarian operations in Angola. Particular attention should be paid to those projects regarding protection activities, mine action, and the resettlement of displaced populations.
- Ensure that financial support for demobilization programs continues and does not divert resources away from urgent assistance and protection for IDPs.

- Provide financial and other support for the creation of a national network among local nongovernmental organizations and church groups active on human rights issues and dealing with the displaced. This process should include the participation of international nongovernmental organizations.

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